United Nations

A/C.2/64/SR.21

General Assembly
Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
21 January 2010

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 21st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 23 October 2009, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. García González (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (El Salvador)
later: Mr. Mohamed Cherif Diallo (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Guinea)

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09-57447 (E)

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In the absence of Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea), Mr. García González (El Salvador), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 60: Agriculture development and food security (*continued*) (A/64/65 and A/64/211)

1. **Mr. Gotta** (Ethiopia) said that the issues of agricultural development and food security were at the heart of Ethiopia's efforts to combat poverty. The Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI) strategy recognized that the long-term transformation of the national economy was dependent on transformation of the agricultural sector, and included measures such as liberalizing the market for agricultural products, strengthening the supply of yield-enhancing technologies, supporting involvement by the private sector and offering training to farmers to improve their productive capacity. As a result of consistent increases in the Government's budgetary allocation to agriculture over the previous decade, which had enabled continuous investment in such areas as capacity-building, infrastructure development and regulatory services, Ethiopia's agricultural production had recently grown at an average rate of 10 per cent each year, double-digit overall growth in gross domestic product (GDP) had been recorded for the previous five consecutive years and agricultural exports had increased by 20 per cent each year for the previous three years.

2. He was grateful to all development partners that had helped Ethiopia to combat poverty and food insecurity, through such partnerships as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The challenge of ensuring food security was linked to the issue of climate change, and Ethiopia was looking forward to genuine and effective international cooperation at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in the hope that it would be a milestone in the global drive towards achieving food security.

3. **Ms. Lemieux** (Canada) said that the international community must do more to support the efforts of the most vulnerable developing countries to increase food production, especially if progress was to be made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The structural causes of food insecurity, including poor investment in sustainable agricultural development, insufficient levels of production due to extreme weather conditions, rising production costs and population growth, must be addressed. Many developing countries had made commendable efforts to reverse the downward trend in investment through initiatives such as CAADP, and South-South cooperation was a promising vehicle for the sharing of expertise in sustainable agricultural production. The United Nations had a key role to play in efforts towards food security, and she encouraged all agencies to enhance cooperation in that regard.

4. Canada intended to double its spending on agricultural development over three years, in keeping with a pledge made by the Group of Eight (G-8) at its L'Aquila summit, and had recently announced its strategy for increasing food security through food aid and nutrition, agriculture and research. Other measures that Canada had taken included untying its food aid in order to reach those who needed it faster and at a lower cost while supporting local agricultural development, working with the World Food Programme (WFP) to procure and manage food stocks to enable better response to emergencies, stepping up promotion of nutrient supplement and food fortification and continuing its strong tradition of research and innovation in agriculture by supporting the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research with a view to increasing the micronutrient values of staple foods and exploring new ways to help vulnerable rural communities adjust to the impacts of climate change.

5. As the international community prepared for the World Summit on Food Security, it was vital that commitments with respect to food security and agriculture development should be met, especially through national policies. The fact that the Committee on World Food Security of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had agreed on reforms to make it more coherent and coordinated was to be welcomed, as it would encourage greater international policy convergence.

6. **Mr. Sergeev** (Belarus) said that the poorest countries had been the worst affected by the global food crisis. He therefore welcomed the Comprehensive Framework for Action developed by the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, which provided an effective instrument for international cooperation, and called on donor countries to provide

the necessary support for its implementation. In that context, developed countries should focus on minimizing export restrictions and import tariffs and on ensuring the free movement of agricultural goods. A logical step in that direction would be the conclusion of the Doha Development Round.

7. The notion of partnership was fundamentally contradicted by protectionist policies, which destroyed markets for goods and contributed to rising prices. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's call for countries to refrain from such measures and to strengthen the humanitarian dimension of export policies.

8. Food security would be impossible without a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Belarus intended to make its contribution to the post-Kyoto process and had assumed major commitments to reduce its emissions. However, a paradoxical situation had emerged whereby the protracted ratification of the amendment to annex B of the Kyoto Protocol was preventing Belarus from making use of the Kyoto mechanism to modernize its economy. His country therefore appealed to delegations to accelerate the ratification of the amendment in their countries.

9. The food crisis would also not be overcome without the use of new and advanced technology. In that respect, current ambivalence towards the use of biofuels should not hinder the development of bioenergy. The declaration to be issued at the forthcoming World Summit on Food Security should reflect the need for all countries to have access to state-of-the-art technologies in the field of energy.

10. While Belarus had a developed agro-industrial sector, its food production capacity could be further strengthened through increased cooperation with FAO. In the context of the current food crisis, FAO should therefore step up its technical assistance services to countries with a view to increasing the quality and quantity of the food that they produced.

11. **Ms. Siriwatana** (Thailand), recalling expectations that world hunger was expected to worsen as a result of the economic and financial crisis and that the world population would increase to 9.1 billion by 2050, said that long-term, comprehensive and coordinated actions must be taken immediately to address the multifaceted and far-reaching issues of agriculture development and food insecurity. Thailand, a country dependent on agriculture, was in the process of drafting a new strategic plan on food and agriculture that would cover such key priorities as technology transfer, fair and equitable trade and agricultural infrastructure development. As a major food exporter, it was committed to maintaining the balance of rice production and rice exports and to preserving a free and open international agricultural market. Smallholders, who continued to be a significant component of Thai rural society, were vital to promoting household food security, environmental conservation and self-reliance, and should be empowered to enable them to contribute to promoting sustainable agricultural development and sustainable use of natural resources and to improving the quality of life of poor people.

12. Partnership at the regional and international levels was vital in addressing the common challenges of agricultural development and food security. Thailand had worked within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to strengthen cooperation. Measures taken demonstrated members' strong commitment to ensuring long-term food security in the ASEAN region, including the ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security and the East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve.

13. International cooperation could help transform the food crisis into an opportunity for sustainable agricultural development. The sharing of knowledge was especially important, and innovative agricultural methods such as organic farming and community-based enterprise would help to balance profit and sustainability. As part of efforts to address challenges related to production, trade and investment should be increased downstream in areas such as food processing and branding.

14. The United Nations system could play a key role in technology transfer to developing countries. Her Government supported the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and the Comprehensive Framework for Action, and looked forward to working with all partners at the upcoming World Summit on Food Security in Rome. Stressing the importance of international financial resources to developing countries' food security efforts, she urged developed countries to meet their commitments to increase official development assistance. Thailand was committed to promoting a global partnership for development through North-South, South-South, trilateral and multilateral cooperation.

15. **Mr. Taguri** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that despite the recent slight decline in basic food prices, they were likely to rise again as a result of increased demand, greater use of biofuels and the lack of sound national agricultural policies. The food crisis was certain to threaten the political, economic and social stability of poorer countries. Despite the utility of emergency food assistance, the radical solution involved recognizing the error of past international policies, which had failed to focus on threats to food security despite a growing population, climate change, declining agricultural production and signs of a speculative trend regarding food commodities. It was paradoxical that a world that spent hundreds of billions of dollars on weapons currently faced a food crisis while 30 billion dollars a year could guarantee increased production and ward off famine and poverty.

16. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, a food-importing country, had reduced tariffs on food imports. It encouraged local production and had implemented a project to grow more than 100,000 hectares of wheat under irrigation. For Africa, it believed in the importance of intensive specialization of agricultural production as the best way to combat poverty and hunger. Africa's climatic diversity and fertility and the availability of river water sources offered the opportunity for joint effort to satisfy all the continent's food needs. African efforts to address its agriculture and water challenges were being coordinated in keeping with the 2003 Maputo Declaration and the 2004 Sirte Declaration. The declaration issued by the thirteenth African summit, held in July 2009, had emphasized the importance of investment in agriculture, a comprehensive agricultural development programme for Africa, efforts to counter climate change and African integration as the way to meet those challenges.

17. His country was engaged in joint investments, especially with countries south of the Sahara, in agricultural projects aimed at insuring food security, and had organized numerous meetings in which African agriculture and water officials had participated. It had also played a major part in the establishment and financing of the financial institutions of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States, intended for granting loans and financing production and service projects in many of the Community's member States, and was encouraging Libyan investors to invest in African countries.

18. **Ms. Aitimova** (Kazakhstan) said that Kazakhstan, already one of the world's top 10 grain exporters, was committed to further increasing production and export. Kazakhstan's vast territory and agricultural activity ensured its own food security and created great export potential, although low annual precipitation levels were of concern, especially in the context of climate change. Thanks to Government measures to combat the food crisis — including creating State reserves of important food products, increasing State support to the agricultural sector and forming food belts around the country's largest cities — Kazakhstan had maintained food security and improved conditions for investment in the agricultural sector, as even larger yields could be produced with increased financial resources.

19. Kazakhstan and FAO had signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with a view to undertaking joint projects in the agricultural sector and to further the country's development through the exchange of information and expertise. Kazakhstan attached great importance to cooperating with the United Nations to ensure food security at the regional level, and a FAO regional office for Central Asia was to be opened in Astana. Kazakhstan had for many years been providing food assistance to needy countries in the form of grain and wheat. She urged international organizations to channel funds to the region through the new FAO regional office in accordance with the recent G-8 agreement in L'Aquila on improving global food security. Joint international efforts should include creating a common database on worldwide food production and consumption, coordinating scientific research and improving food logistics.

20. **Ms. Pessôa** (Brazil) said that while the Secretary-General's report (A/64/350) correctly highlighted certain characteristics of the food crisis — the persistence of hunger and malnutrition despite there being sufficient food, price volatility, chronic underinvestment in developing countries' agricultural sector and the fact that poor harvests had affected food availability — and referred to the comprehensive policy recommendations from the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and global, regional and national actions to respond to food security challenges, it did not mention important initiatives in her region, such as the Latin American and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025 initiative and the establishment of virtual food banks, or the valuable work undertaken by Committee on World Food

Security. In its analysis of the contributing factors to the surge in food prices in 2008, the report did not refer to agricultural subsidies in rich countries, which distorted world food markets and hampered rural development in developing countries, or to the high price of fossil fuels.

21. Although the report was based on available data, at times it relied on projections and hypotheses that did not adequately reflect the challenges facing developing countries. for example, the claim that climate change could lead to conflict over scarce land and water resources contradicted another report by the Secretary-General, which quoted a research finding that water and land scarcity were only weak predictors of armed conflict while political instability and other factors appeared to be more important. Both climate change and sustainable agriculture should be viewed through the prism of sustainable development, and comprehensive approaches to food security must include investment to enhance areas such as capacity-building and technology transfer for resilience in the long term.

22. **Mr. Limeres** (Argentina) said that the reformed Committee on World Food Security would be the main international and intergovernmental platform for country-led efforts aimed at eliminating hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all. Through a transparent and inclusive reform process, it had been agreed that the Committee's functions would be twofold: it would coordinate policies at the global level and support and advise countries and regions, and it would gradually assume responsibility for coordination at the national and regional levels, promoting monitoring and the creation of a global strategic framework for food security and nutrition. An important role of the Committee would be to establish links with actors and to promote better cooperation between the Rome-based organizations — FAO, WFP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) — and other United Nations organizations. The reformed Committee would be more relevant to the new realities of the multilateral system, strengthening global governance and contributing to better coordination of efforts at the national and regional levels to combat hunger.

23. **Mr. Madani** (Afghanistan) said that his Government was grateful to the United Nations system, especially WFP and FAO, for the continued aid and support provided to Afghanistan and for their efforts with respect to research and development and technical assistance on agriculture and food security, and welcomed the recent L'Aquila Initiative on Global Food Security.

24. Afghanistan's once strong agriculture sector had suffered severely since conflict had engulfed the country. Productivity had declined, infrastructure had been destroyed and price fluctuations, along with droughts, had created food shortages. Although only 12 per cent of the territory was fertile for agriculture, 80 per cent of the population lived in rural areas and was dependent on subsistence farming; indeed, agriculture accounted for half of the country's GDP. However, war had left most of the population, especially farmers, dependent on international assistance. It was therefore vital to continue humanitarian assistance and create food safety nets while restructuring and investing in the agriculture sector. As a result of conflict and drought, malnutrition was a growing problem, and achievement of Goal 1 of the MDGs would thus depend on substantial efforts, with the support of the international community, to restructure the agriculture sector. Smallholders and women, who were most vulnerable to political and economic instability, must be at the centre of Afghanistan's food and agriculture policy.

25. Several key steps were necessary in order to rebuild Afghanistan's agriculture sector. Productivity must be improved using sustainable practices, including water conservation, since food security could be achieved only with sustainable use of natural resources. More research and funding was needed in the area of drought-resistant crops and seed varieties, in order to build resilience to climate change and price fluctuations. Afghanistan's infrastructure, including irrigation systems, must be rebuilt with the support of the international community. Policies for food pricing should be established and safety nets created for times when high food prices led to food shortages so that the most vulnerable sectors of society did not suffer the impact of unstable food and financial markets.

26. The reconstruction of Afghanistan provided an opportunity to restore the country's position as a self-sufficient agricultural producer and adapt agricultural practices to the effects of climate change and economic conditions. He urged the international community to continue aiding Afghanistan to overcome the obstacles it faced in the pursuit of food security.

27. **Mr. Berguño** (Chile) said that all subsidies that distorted international trade must be abolished, and developing countries must be guaranteed better access to product markets. That would lead to better purchasing power for all States, families and individuals and better access to food for all. He urged all States to support the high-level event on the food and economic crises in post-conflict countries, to be held on 29 October 2009 and organized jointly by the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and WFP.

28. **Mr. Valero Briceño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that while his delegation acknowledged the work of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and noted the recommendations presented in its Comprehensive Framework for Action, as well as the important work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, it did not agree with all of the conclusions contained in the report of the Secretary-General on agriculture development and food security (A/64/221).

29. There should be no hunger in the world, since sufficient food was produced for all. Yet food insecurity for developing countries was likely to worsen still further in the future as a result of such factors as the continued unequal distribution of global wealth, unfair competition from multinational companies and the increasing impact of climate change. The report of the Secretary-General had failed to mention those concerns.

30. Capitalism had transformed the wonders of nature into mere economic commodities to be exploited ad infinitum. That attitude had led inexorably to the environmental tragedy currently unfolding. However, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had developed another model for agricultural production based on an entirely different relationship with nature. Furthermore, since the right to food was enshrined in Venezuelan legislation, food security and food sovereignty were national priorities.

31. Comprehensive rural development was of great importance. His Government was therefore strengthening agriculture as a strategic sector for land use and promoting the redistribution of income, among other measures. The resounding success achieved in different areas of national agricultural production was helping not only to raise the income and standard of living of Venezuelans, but also to increase their life expectancy and well-being.

32. **Mr. Traore** (Senegal) said that, while global food production had increased at an exponential rate, the number of people suffering from famine had not declined. For the first time in human history, there were more than 1 billion undernourished people on Earth. Moreover, the prevalence of hunger exceeded 35 per cent in 16 countries in Africa, and external assistance to overcome food insecurity was routinely required by 20 African countries.

33. Undernourishment was a grave threat to the efforts already made to promote peace, stability, human rights, health and well-being, including in the context of the MDGs. His delegation therefore advocated promoting the agricultural sector by adjusting demand, particularly among smallholders; developing rural areas through appropriate incentives and massive investment; increasing food availability and strengthening capacities to promote comprehensive rural development; and guaranteeing immediate access to food for poor and vulnerable groups in rural and urban areas through social protection measures and safety nets.

34. However, none of those measures would succeed if developed countries maintained their agricultural subsidies and protectionist trade policies. International commitments to provide official development assistance (ODA) would also need to be honoured in order to reduce poverty.

35. Endogenous policies were also essential in that respect. For its part, Senegal had launched a major drive for agriculture, food and abundance, a comprehensive agricultural programme which had already led to greater national self-sufficiency in rice, the main staple food in Senegal, and a large increase in other forms of production.

36. International financial, technical and technological assistance was essential for the continued success of such efforts. In that respect, his delegation welcomed the financial support provided by the United States Millennium Challenge Corporation and called on other donors to follow its example of fruitful partnership with Senegal.

37. **Archbishop Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) recalled that in 2009, the number of undernourished people worldwide had for the first time

risen to over 1 billion. While the world produced enough food for the global community, inefficient and mismanaged systems were hampering the ability of supply to keep pace with demand. Agricultural policies must clearly be adapted to address the needs of a growing world population.

38. In Africa, at present only 10 per cent of the 400 million hectares of savannah from Senegal to South Africa were productive. The policy of small-to-medium-scale farming adopted in other regions of the world over the past 20 years could help to harness the full agricultural potential of the African savannah. Such efforts should be facilitated by immediate land reform and the revision of national systems of ownership, among other agricultural policies and measures aimed at empowering farmers.

39. The current financial crisis had demonstrated that greater importance should be attached to the role of labour and production than to that of capital, financial transactions and speculation. The destabilizing effects of the latter continued to cause a great deal of uncertainty and unpredictability for farmers. Trade- and market-distorting subsidies should also be reassessed to ensure that farmers in developing countries were paid a fair wage and were able to participate fully in national and global markets.

40. Science and technology, while certainly necessary for the improvement of agriculture, were insufficient in themselves to achieve balanced solutions to the problems of agricultural development and food security. Serious reflection was therefore needed to create a new agricultural economy more attentive to human needs and relations in which farmers became the real protagonists.

41. *Mr. Mohamed Cherif Diallo, (Guinea), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

42. **Ms. von Lilien-Waldau** (Observer for the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)) said that the world had entered a new period of global food insecurity in which efforts to combat poverty and hunger were being undermined by food price volatility, the global economic downturn and the impact of climate change. Much of the progress made towards achieving the MDGs had already been reversed: 1.4 billion people still lived on less than $1.25 a day and the number of hungry people worldwide had reached historic levels.

43. While the current global economic recession was at the core of the sharp increase in world hunger, the lack of long-term investment in agriculture was the underlying cause. The recent political unrest sparked by high food prices had awakened the world to the consequences of further neglect. There was a growing awareness that agricultural development would become an increasingly critical issue, since the global population was expected to reach 9.1 billion by 2050.

44. In order to address the problem of global food insecurity, a comprehensive approach of immediate measures and long-term solutions was required, as contained in the Comprehensive Framework for Action developed by the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. The Comprehensive Framework correctly refocused attention on the role played by smallholder farmers and poor rural producers, particularly women, in global food production, poverty reduction and natural resource management, and on the need to support small-scale agricultural production.

45. IFAD welcomed the mobilization over the past year of the political will to improve global food security, as demonstrated by the recent commitment made by the Group of Eight to invest more than $20 billion in agriculture over the following three years as part of a food security initiative. IFAD would be a willing partner in any food security initiatives to improve the lives of the rural poor.

46. Over the past 30 years, IFAD had invested $11 billion in low-interest loans and grants to promote agricultural and rural development and enhanced food security in developing countries. It intended to increase such loans and grants by 50 per cent to $3 billion over the following three years. IFAD was also drawing on its programme experience to step up its involvement in the development of national strategies, plans and project designs.

47. No single entity acting alone could effectively address the challenges posed by hunger and poverty. Inclusive and transparent partnerships at all levels were essential for the adoption of a coordinated and comprehensive approach likely to achieve the long-term goal of food security for all.

48. **Mr. Mchumo** (Observer for the Common Fund for Commodities) recalled that there was a strong link between the mandate of the Fund, which supported the socio-economic development of developing countries through the financing of commodity development

projects, and the issue of agricultural development and food security.

49. While it was important to address the immediate needs of vulnerable populations in the event of food shortages, it was equally necessary to tackle structural issues responsible for the long-term problem of food insecurity, such as the supply capacity limitations under which commodity producers operated and the need for an enabling environment, including an equitable, predictable and rules-based international trade system.

50. The food crisis must therefore be considered in a comprehensive, holistic and long-term manner that incorporated potential means to increase yields and productivity as well as further ways to support the development of the agricultural and commodity sector. In that context, the Fund was helping smallholders to enhance their productivity through strategic rice projects in selected countries in Africa and Central America.

51. The Fund intended to further enhance its efforts by creating trust funds for food security projects with potential donor countries and institutions. To that end, additional resources were needed so that the Fund's various development institutions and partners could carry out practical action on the ground to improve food security.

52. Lastly, while welcoming the establishment of CAADP, he stressed that such initiatives needed to be operationalized in cooperation with recognized and experienced institutions working in the food, agricultural and commodity development sectors. Potential partner institutions with practical experience should therefore be identified based on their relevant expertise.

53. **Ms. Ratsifandrihamanana** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) noted that the priority areas for action by the international community in response to the global food crisis had already been identified in the Comprehensive Framework for Action. The international community was also aware that, in order to feed an expected world population of 9.1 billion people by 2050, food production would need to increase by 70 per cent and an annual net investment of $83 billion in agriculture would be required. FAO would therefore continue to work in close cooperation with Governments, United Nations agencies, civil society and the private sector to meet those challenges.

54. The events of the past two years had shown that food security was fundamental for national security: sharp increases in food prices had been followed by riots and social unrest in 22 countries. At present there were 31 countries with grave food crises requiring emergency assistance.

55. In that context, the FAO Council had decided to organize the World Summit on Food Security in November 2009 to address key food security challenges. The outcome of the Summit should complement and strengthen the ongoing reform of the Organization, enhance the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, and improve the coherence and coordination of the FAO Committee on World Food Security, which was also engaged in a wide-ranging reform of its composition.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.